

Murphys Irish Day 2019 – Saturday, March 16

Presented by the Murphys Business Association

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WALKING MAN OF MURPHYS NAMED MURPHYS IRISH DAY GRAND MARSHAL

Ric Ryan, who has earned the title of the Walking Man of Murphys, will be the Grand Marshal when the Murphys Irish Day parade makes its way down Main St on St. Patrick's Day eve, Saturday, March 16 at 11 a.m.

"We always try to select someone who has helped to make this such a special place," says Carrie Nelson, who with her husband Gerry organizes the popular parade.

"We think that Ric is a prime example."

Ryan, 72, who fought for his country in Vietnam, ended up having both knees and one hip replaced. In 2008, he saw a TV news story about UCLA Health's Operation Mend. The program provides specialty medical and psychological health care for veterans injured in the line of duty and includes their families in the care.

Inspired by the story, he embarked on a one-man fundraising campaign by collecting waves during his regular walks through Murphys. Each time someone in a passing car waved at him during a walk, which isn't uncommon in this tight-knit small town, he would wave back and earmark 25 cents from his savings.

Local residents soon heard what he was doing, which led to more waving, and they began pulling over their cars to hand him cash and checks.

"I told people that I was walking for Operation Mend because the veterans aren't required to pay for anything and the program takes care of their families too," says Ryan. "This is my way of helping out the younger generation of veterans."

Eventually, Ryan set up Operation Mend collection cans around town and people gave even more. The donations ranged anywhere from \$1 to \$5,000. Two golf tournaments were held which netted more money. Ten years later, Ryan has walked more than 8,000 miles and raised about \$125,000 for Operation Mend.

“When we told Ric we wanted him to be Grand Marshal he was thrilled,” says Nelson. “Not because of his ego but because it would help spread the story of Operation Mend to even more people.”

The Murphys Irish Day Parade is only one element of the daylong celebration that begins with a pancake breakfast put on by the First Congregational, United Church of Christ on the corner of Algiers and Church Sts. from 8 until 10 a.m. Tickets at the door are \$8 for adults and \$5 for children. The menu includes pancakes, ham, scrambled eggs, juice, tea and coffee.

Main Events

The Main St. festivities will start at 10 a.m. and continue until 5 p.m. There is no admission charge.

More than 150 vendors, including 22 that are new to the event, will have traveled from near and far to set up along Main St. with offerings of fine arts and crafts, home-baked delicacies, Irish themed souvenirs and a variety of tasty things to eat and drink.

The Native Sons will be selling their famous corned beef sandwiches. A wide variety of other foods will be available along Main St. when hunger sets in. Beverages on sale will include fresh lemonade, water, beer and wine.

In addition, all the restaurants, tasting rooms and shops on Main St. will be open to explore and appreciate.

Live Entertainment

Live entertainment with a decidedly Irish theme will be presented throughout the day on two stages and along Main Street. Music will fill the air. The Tommyknocker

Cloggers will set everyone's feet a tapping. A variety of musical groups will add to the festival atmosphere.

Free Parking & Shuttle Service

Free parking will be available at Ironstone Vineyards on Six Mile Road. A free shuttle bus, provided by Ironstone and the Murphys Business Association, will run between Ironstone and the Arbors parking lot at Jones and Scott Streets. Shuttles will leave approximately every 20 minutes from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Free parking will also be available at the Black Bart Playhouse parking lot on Algiers St. after the parade has finished and cleared. Parking for cars with disabled person placards or plates will be located in the Arbors parking lot at Jones and Scott Streets and at the Masonic Hall, 384 Church St.

There will be no parking from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Main, Church, Algiers, Sheep Ranch, Scott, and Jones Sts. and Six Mile Road. When traveling to the event motorists must use Highway 4, and not Murphys Grade Road.

Main Street will be closed to cars from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the day of the event.

The major Irish Day sponsors are Black Oak Casino, Broll Mountain Vineyards, The Spice Tin, Cal Waste, Insight Manufacturing, Ironstone Vineyards, Marisolio, Mark Twain Medical Center / Dignity Health, DLS Insurance, Murphys Pourhouse, and Tanner Vineyards.

For more information go to www.visitmurphys.com.

Murphys Irish Day is presented each year by the Murphys Business Association with proceeds funding the activities of the association as well as community projects and enhancements. For more information go to www.visitmurphys.com.

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